

**INTEGRATED ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES FOR APPROVAL OF
PROCESS CONTROL AND SAFETY SYSTEM SOFTWARE OBJECTS**

ABSTRACT

A software object approval system is integrated with a process control or safety system environment and, in particular, with a process control or safety system design environment to implement and manage electronic approval of new software objects created within the process control and safety system environment. The software object approval system electronically generates identification information representing a group of entities whose approval is needed prior to implementing a software object within the process control or safety system. The system may then send the software object to the entities and receive from each entity an electronic indication regarding approval of the software object. The approval system prevents the process control or safety system from implementing the software object until each entity within the group of entities approves the software object.